

## Trauma-proofing Chaplains for Crisis Ministry

by CAPT Jane Vieira, CHC, USN



***“There is no better training for operational ministry and crisis response than the Pastoral Care Residency. Dealing with death and dying, and acute emotional and physical crisis is about the best approximation I can think of to what you would see in a battlefield environment.”***

**RADM Bonnie Potter, MC, USN  
Fleet Surgeon, CINCLANTFLT**

The **Pastoral Care Residency** (PCR) is the Navy Chaplain Corp’s Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, and is fully accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE).

This 12-month residency, sponsored jointly by the Navy Chaplain Corps and Navy Medicine, provides intensive pastoral training in a peacetime environment that most closely approximates the trauma, crises and stress found in combat and traumatic critical events.

The program takes place every year from July through June at two locations: Portsmouth, Virginia and Bethesda, Maryland. The Portsmouth training is a joint venture between Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia and the Veterans Administration Medical Center, Hampton Roads, Virginia. The Bethesda program is a joint, tri-service program between the National Naval Medical Center and nearby Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington DC. Currently, five students are trained at Portsmouth and three at Bethesda each year. A sixth student, a Canadian chaplain, funded by the Canadian Military Forces, joins the five residents at Portsmouth.

In a wartime environment, and during traumatic non-combat events, chaplains face the reality of providing support to wounded, dying and dead personnel, as well as to the medical, rescue and recovery personnel who care for them.

The intensive one-year PCR is an accredited CPE residency that prepares chaplains for ministry dealing with trauma, critical incident stress management, death and dying, operational stress management, disaster response, caring for



caregivers and a number of issues related to operational ministry and homeland security.

The residency includes individualized and group supervision. During clinical rotations, chaplain residents serve as active members of a multi-disciplinary team in such areas as trauma care, intensive care, coronary care, oncology, psychiatry and alcohol rehabilitation. Didactic sessions encompass numerous subjects, such as the dynamics of pastoral crisis intervention, pastoral care and counseling, battlefield ethics, theology of grief and suffering,

stress and trauma, death and dying, family dynamics, personality disorders and substance abuse. Residents also complete a week-long certification in "Traumatology and Critical Event Management."

Upon completion of the residency year, **graduates are eligible for board certification in the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)** and the

**National Institute of Business and Industrial Chaplains (NIBIC)**, professional organizations which certify chaplains for specialized ministry settings such as medical centers, educational institutions, prisons, businesses and corporations.

### **Basic Facts about the Pastoral Care Residency**

**Who may apply:** Chaplains with no prior CPE training or no more than one CPE unit may request to be considered for this program. Eight lieutenant commanders (or those selected) are chosen annually for PCR.

**How to apply:** Check the post-graduate block on your Officer Preference Card ("dream sheet"). Specify "Pastoral Care Residency" and indicate your preferred training site (Portsmouth or Bethesda). In addition, you may send an e-mail to the detailee amplifying your interest in the program.

**What is the Benefit:** Chaplains will receive four accredited quarters of CPE that will greatly strengthen their counseling and pastoral care skills. This training will also be a transferable asset once one completes Navy chaplaincy and returns to civilian ministry.

**Why the Program:** PCR meets the need for the Navy Chaplain Corps' 1440-N sub-specialty billets that require chaplains who have completed a minimum of four units of ACPE accredited Clinical Pastoral Education.

**When is the Payback:** Each graduate must serve a minimum of two years in a Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) hospital or medical school 1440-N billet or in a Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO) billet immediately following the completion of the of the residency.

**Funding and Billets:** Training dollars come from the Chief of Chaplain's N977 budget. Residency billets are provided by BUMED.

For more information, contact the Office of the Chaplain, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery at 202-762-0498 or DSN: 762-0498.